

The Push: EL/Honor Students!



Warsaw Community Schools



WE ARE Warsaw Community Schools, a rural school system in Warsaw, Indiana, 7300 students grades PK-12, 49% rural poverty.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES are 17% English Learners of the WCS population, approximately 1250 ELs (Levels 1-5), with 33 distinct heritage languages.

OUR TEACHERS (classroom and EL) are all trained in the Center for Applied Linguistic, “*What’s Different about Teaching Reading to Students Learning English*”. Current training for all teachers is the WIDA Standards Implementation. Our corporation has 16 certified EL teachers (EL Certification is required).

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE has been to get a comparable number of EL students into honors, dual credit and AP classes at the secondary level.

Our premise...If 17% of our student population are ELs (Levels 1-5), then 17% of our honors, dual credit and AP students should be ELs! However, we discovered in 2012 that only 4% of our EL students were in any type of honors classes.

OUR STEPS

1. We took a list of all WCS students’ (grades 7-12) who were in honors, dual credit and AP classes. We marked the students who were EL (Level 1-5).
2. This gave us a baseline for where we needed to focus our efforts. We began with seniors, but found that they had to be recommended originally by the former grades. We finally found the “gate-keeping” year was when our 6th graders enter middle school. If our EL students did not get into honors classes at the beginning of middle school, they never got in!
3. Now each year, the EL program monitors that 7th grade honors classes have 17% EL students.
4. EL support is provided in honors classes and in an EL honors study class. In addition, one of our EL teachers is certified in 11th grade AP English.
5. Currently, in 2015, our 11th grade AP English classes are 15% EL students!!!

OUR SOURCES

“The kids are great! They are empowered and building their confidence. They are more comfortable asking questions. Now they feel like they belong. We love them!!!”

.....Quotes from Warsaw Community High School Honors and EL Teachers

For more information about our EL program or corporation, email: *Wendy Wildman Long* at wlong@warsaw.k12.in.us.

Extended Interview with Wendy Wildman Long

1) What identification methods did you use in order to accurately identify which of your ELs were high ability?

ELA criteria: 6th grade CoGat score (nonverbal for ELs), 3-5th grade ISTEP scores, Fountas & Pinnell levels, LAS Links Scores and growth (ELs), EL teacher recommendation.

Math criteria: 6th grade CoGat (Quantitative for all and nonverbal for ELs), 3-6th grade ISTEP scores, WCS Pre-Algebra Assessment Scores, EL teacher recommendation.

2) How did you communicate the need with the staff in your district for making your high ability programming more inclusive of your student population?

Four years ago, we began conversations with the high school honors teachers about the low percentage of EL students in honors classes, then it led to conversations with the counselors, building principals and ELA and math teachers making the recommendations. The EL department has worked collaboratively with the corporation and now the Chief Academic Officer has set guidelines as a district to include EL students in the selection process. Honestly, it has been a “mindset” change for many educators!

3) How you are supporting your ELs that are in high ability classes?

Our EL teachers and support staff are scheduled into honors classes and work collaboratively with the honors classroom teacher. In addition, at the secondary level (7-12) we offer an advanced ENL class where the honors students work at a high level and receive support. The high school also has what they call “Working Lunch” where students can bring their work to the EL room and get help with homework while they eat lunch.

Did You Know?

Indiana state law IC 20-36-2-2 requires school corporations to have a high ability program plan that includes “student assessments that identify high ability students using multifaceted assessments to ensure that students not identified by traditional assessments because of economic disadvantage, cultural background, underachievement, or disabilities are included”